Depot Town Rag

Volume 19, Number 12 "All the news in one block in one month."

December 1996

100% FREE Rag Content

- Banners
- *Holidays*
- Travel agent
- **Market news**
- *Cut from new cloth*
- **DTA business**

and other strictly local stuff . . .

A Publication of the DEPOT TOWN ASSOCIATION, INC. P.O. Box 970-235, Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197-0804

DDA takes former gardens for parking

Years of negotiation culminated last month when the Depot Town Downtown Development Authority and Conrail finally closed the deal to use the former MCRR gardens property for additional parking for the district.

Running from the far side of the depot to the Michigan Ladder Company lot line at Oak Street, the property extends from the railroad right-of-way to the line of the former alley behind the houses on North River Street. Also included is a small triangle of land at the edge of Maple Street which was once a perennial flower bed.

Overgrown and unnecessary trees will be removed along the eastern line of the property to add more parking, and the lot will be graded and smoothed. Plans for further development are way down the road, say DDA members, but, after the accomplishment of obtaining the property, the rest should be easy.

This issue recounts an earlier history of that historic space.

MCRR gardens remembered

YPSILANTI, MI: John Laidlaw's gardens at Ypsilanti. The Swain sisters could not have dreamed they - and Laidlaw's gardens - would become world famous for the attention to quality and detail in horticulture and hospitality. For twenty-eight years, the gardens at the MCRR depot in Ypsilanti would be featured all over the world and visited by presidents and kings.

Ypsilanti, Depot Town, how did your garden grow?

[James Thomas Mann has been digging in the gardens of Ypsilanti libraries again, and look what he's dug up this time!]

"With silver bells, and cockleshells ... and lilacs, alternantheras, avrea nana, parychoides major, versicolor, spathenlata, water lilies, Echevera secunda, Sedum varegatum, Aresena landinii, hens and chickens ... and pretty maids all in a row."

Depot Gardens remembered in the *Ypsilantian*

13 August 1891

The landscape gardens of the Michigan Central, at the depot here, are well worthy of mention among the improvements of the season. The large variety and profusion of flowering plants, and the tasteful manner in which they are arranged, attract the notice of passengers and visitors and reflect much credit upon those to whose taste and enterprise we are indebted for it. We wish the public need not be so excluded from a view of it. Mr. Damon announces that all ladies taking passage on trains Nos. 10, 2 and 3, receive bouquets from the garden, and they should not forget the trains — 8:10 a.m. and 5:45 p.m. going east, and 8:10 a.m. going west.

14 April 1892

The Michigan Central will commence immediately the construction of a greenhouse at the west end of their garden here, for propagating plants for depot gardens all along the line from Detroit to Kalamazoo. The house will be 60 feet long, and will be in charge of the present gardner, John Laidlaw, who will distribute the plants to the various stations, and lay out and plant their gardens. The garden at this station will be employed in the production of the train bouquets which proved so popular last year, and which will be distributed on a much larger scale this year. Station Agent Damon has that in charge, and expects to distribute 60,000 bouquets this season.

13 April 1893

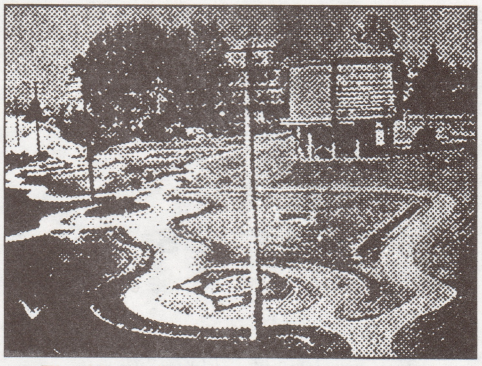
Mr. Laidlaw, in charge of the Michigan Central Landscape garden here, is busily preparing for the summer campaign, and has his greenhouse packed with plants, not only for the garden here, but all along the road. He has already bloom enough to furnish a lot of bouquets for the railroad men in Detroit hospitals every Saturday....

[The MCRR Garden continue within...]

Join the festivities at the 5th annual New Year Jubilee

Yes, believe it or not, it's time to start thinking about New Year's Eve plans. Thousands of people have enjoyed the first four Jubilees, and this year's promises to be just as much fun and entertaining. Over 40 performances by 30+ different performers have been booked into the local churches and buildings in and around Ypsilanti's Historic District form 6:30P.M. to 1A.M. on New Year's Eve. By purchasing an admission badge, you can travel from site to site throughout the evening, enjoying the performances. In addition, there will be plenty to eat and drink at the Jubilee. Most of the entertainment sites are planning special food and beverage options for the evening. Take an entertainment break and enjoy the Festival of Lights display in Riverside Park.

The Jubilee is still one of the best entertainment values around: Adults can purchase badges in advance for $10 [Cont. on back page]



The Masonic Emblems display of 1892

17 June 1892

We understand that the Michigan Central has purchased the old Sage livery barn, near the depot, and will raze it to the ground. Part of the lot they will use for an addition to their flower garden...

9 December 1892

They've heard of us

Something of how extensively the Ypsilanti custom of giving flowers to the ladies on railways trains is known and commented upon, may be judged rorm the following item, which we happened upon last night in reading a copy of *Forget-Me-Not*, a ladies' journal published in London, Eng...

Here is the item:

"America makes much more of her women than we do. Where, in any other country but the United States, would we find flowers given to ladies in the trains? In certain trains on the Michigan Central Railway every day who travels by them has a bouquet of wild flowers presented to her, with a beautifully printed time-table, across which is written, in a most artistic manner, 'With the manager's compliments'."

We can perhaps increase our English cousin's wonder with more by informing him that the flowers are not wild but, instead, the finest that skilled and high salaried gardeners can grow, in the beautiful ground and green house in this city devoted to that purpose.

Incidentally, we wonder how many readers of *Forget-Me-Not* ever heard of our beautiful little city of 8,000 inhabitants, or can even prounounce the name, Ypsilanti

11 May 1893

Mr. Laidlaw, floral gardener at the M.C. depot, is constructing an artistic piece to crown the mound where last year he had the Masonic emblems. It is an eagle with half-spread wings, 2 1/2 feet high and as wide, constructed of wire framework ...

1 June 1893

The supplying of flowers to the passengers on through trains stopped here has been resumed, and is this year in charge of the florist Mr. Laidlaw.

25 August 1893

The employees of the Michigan Central Flower Gardens, met last Saturday evening at the home of their foreman, Mr. Laidlaw, it being his 39th birthday. He was presented with a very fine rocker, and a very enjoyable time was had.

22 September 1893

Improvement at the Depot

Mr. Laidlaw is superintending the removal of the little exhibition greenhouse from the west end of the depot to the went end of the grounds, where it will continue in use for the same purpose. That will be a decided improvement, as it has hidden the beautiful garden from the view of many west-bound passengers...

One of the Worlds' Fair excursion trains took 900 bouquets, and the deft handed little girls found it a big job to distribute them.

Mr. Laidlaw's eagle is flourishing finely, and the 'hens and chickens' that compose his plumage are happier in their lot than real hens and chickens could be with a real eagle. That piece takes the eye of every one who sees it, and stamps its maker an artist...

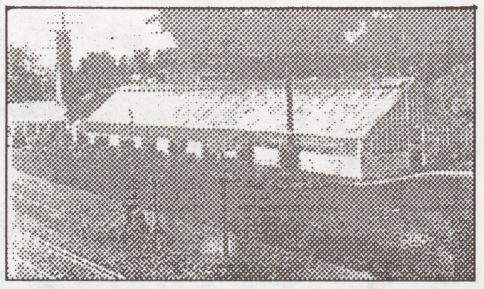
10 August 1894

Those who have not afforded themselves the opportunity of seeing the floral engine at the M.C.R.R. depot at Ypsilanti will be well repaid by going to see it. There are, it is alleged, twenty-three thousand foliage plants in this piece of landscape decoration. Four men are employed all the time to care for the grounds which are said to be the finest along the line between Chicago and New York.

- Ann Arbor Democrat.

15 June 1894

The frame that formed the perch of Mr. Laidlaw's floral eagle at the M.C. garden last summer, was set under the water tank as old rubbish in the fall and this spring a robin found it and built her nest on its top, and raised her brood just where the eagle had stood.



A new greenhouse was built at the west/north end of the gardens, replacing the original greenhouse which was attached to the depot.

12 July 1894

The Depot Garden

Despite the fact that the weather has been decidedly unfavorable to plant growth, the Michigan Central depot garden is again delighting the eyes of the travelers. Mr. Laidlaw has been supervising the transplanting and trimming of the plants until now the plan of the garden is nearly complete. A new feature this year is the graceful curve of foliage plants, called a sweep, which is outlined repeatedly along the slopes...

13 July 1894

Laidlaw's Masterpiece

Mr. Laidlaw's botanical locomotive at the M.C. depot garden is completed, and stands now a surprising spectacle before the eyes of every passenger over this line. It is without doubt the most elaborate, artistic and perfect piece of work in that line that has ever been seen in this country. A full-sized locomotive and cab, complete in all its parts as presented in a side and end view, made up of growing plants of different colored foliage, shows in sharp detail the dark iron of the boiler and wheels, the bright steel of the connecting rods and other parts of the machinery, painted cab and other woodwork, the glass of the cab windows and headlight — every part in startling realism and beauty ...

1 January 1894

The M.C.R.R. Knows How to Do It

Through the kindness of Mr. B.M.Damon, one of the neatest pamphlets ever issued from the press, is on our table with the compliments of the Michigan Central, in which are described the various points of interest along their great thoroughfares of travel. It makes one almost wish the world was not so hard upon the printer as to complement him to forego the luxury of travel in these palace cars which the pages of this pamphlet depict with such exquisite taste...

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...The idea of distributing flowers to the women among the passengers on the Michigan Central — an idea which has resulted in the giving of so much pleasure to so many people — is due to Mr. J.D. Hawkes, as the little cards, 'with the compliments of the chief engineer,' which for so long accompanied the bouquets testified. During the world's fair year nearly 60,000 of these bouquets were distributed on trains. That the little gifts are appreciated by many, at least, of those who receive them is shown by the quantities of letters of thanks which reach both the chief engineer and the passenger department of the road. Here is a simple letter:

'Saturday a.m., July 21, 1894.

To our Friend, the Flower Boy:

Many thanks for the lovely roses given us yesterday. They made our day so very pleasant. We shall not soon forget the picture of you scattering roses in the pathway of others. From the seeds of kindness thus sown we trust you will reap a rich harvest. The pleasure now must be great. We are in the car Roanoke and find the car, the porter, the service and all very satisfactory.

With thanks, your friends, -One Lady From Minneapolis, The Other From Quincy, Ill.' "

4 July 1895

The Central Gardens

The gardens at the Michigan central depot last year were admired by thousands of people and, the floral engine, with every part brought out so distinctly that it seemed real, was thought to be as fine a sight as would ever grace Ypsilanti. But this year gardner Laidlaw has improved the grounds over those of last year and if you have not already visited them do not fail to do so.

Nearly all of the beds have been arranged and the beautiful engine of last year has been replaced by a much more elaborate piece of work. It is a representation of the 'Cantilever bridge at Niagara Falls' with an engine just about to cross it. This floral bridge is built exactly proportionate to the cantilever and is forty feet long. The engine and tender are fourteen feet long and the whole structure contains 37,000 plants...

20 September 1895

The Michigan Central flower gardens are in their glory. To view them is a delight. Flowers in profusion, forest of flowers, of all colors and their complements, glorious in beauty, pleasant in perfume..

14 November 1895

As Usual, To The Front

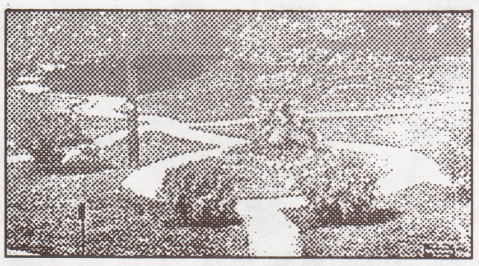
No matter what season of the year it may be, Gardener Laidlaw manages to have a display of some kind of flowers that are will worth seeing, at the Michigan Central flower gardens...

Come see what Nature sent us this month...

Ypsi Food Co-op

Sun 12-5; M,T,Th, F 10-8; Wed. 10-9; Sat. 9-8

312 N. RIVER ST. 483-1520



Flower thefts reported in 1919

6 May 1897

The Depot Garden

The Michigan Central depot garden is being put in readiness for its summer garb. Mr. Laidlaw intends to make the garden more extensive this year both in flowers and foliage plants than it was last season; and a glimpse of the myriads of tiny plants awaiting transplanting indicates that the summer holds in store beauty unsurpassed...

What his *chef d'oeuvre* will be this year, Mr. Laidlaw declines to tell us yet, but ....

10 June 1897

Mr. Laidlaw has put out a beautiful bed of foliage plants at the depot garden, representing the symbols of the order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine...

1 July 1897

Have You Seen It?

Laidlaw's Artistic Landscape Gardening at the Michigan Central Station

On alighting from the Michigan Central train one of the first things to catch the eye of strangers is ...

26 August 1897

The Michigan Central Park and flower garden at Ypsilanti is now in all its glory, and presents a beautiful sight to passengers passing through. It is one of the most beautiful little spots in the state. - *Albion Mirror*

9 September 1897

The Michigan Central Depot Gardens

Lovers of the beautiful should not delay to visit the Michigan Central depot garden which is now at it loveliest. South of the baggage-room is a beautiful specimen of carpet bedding, geometrical designs worked out in different colored coleus and achyranthes, with alyssum for contrast...

Hottest little corner bar & grill in town!

Rated best burgers! ~ Detroit Monthly

SIDETRACK Bar & Grill

• 8 beers on draught

Ypsilanti's Hottest Bar!

56 E. Cross • 483-1035

16 June 1898

Mr. Laidlaw , the gardener at the M.C. depot, is busy these days constructing some kind of a figure to beautify the yard. Each season he has erected something with plants in imitation of houses, railroad engines, etc., but usually keeps secret what he intends to erect....

21 July 1898

The Maine is Remembered

...When the locomotive was built, the traveling public thought it marked the limit of achievement in the line of the gardener's art, but the next year the bridge and locomotive surpassed it...

18 August 1898

A Kalamazoo lady whose husband was a sailor on board the Maine at the time of the explosion, read the description of Mr. Laidlaw's floral Maine and wrote him asking for samples of the plants used in its construction.

4 August 1898

A Thing of Beauty

Visitors by the score have visited the Michigan Central flower garden the past week to view the latest achievement . . .

MCRR Gardens time line:

1855 - Laidlaw born in Scotland
1892- First greenhouse constructed
Livery barn removed
"Masonic emblems" design installed
1893 - *"American Eagle"*
1894 - *"Locomotive"*
1895 - *"Bridge over Niagara Falls"*
1896 - *"Log Cabin"*
1897 - *"Nobles of the Mystic Shrine"*
1898 - *"Battleship Maine"*
1899 - *"Maine"* (again?)
1900 - Laidlaw moves to Detroit
1913 - Olmsted brothers, famed landscape architects, whine about poor design in Ypsi gardens
1917 - Laidlaw's death
1919 - Flower thefts reported
1978 - Trains stop stopping
1996 - DDA takes over garden space for additional parking

Holiday Bazaar

Saturday, December 7, 7A.M. - 3P.M.

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The Market report:

Civil War display at the Freighthouse -Judy Andrews

Local reenactment enthusiast John Delcamp will be displaying his two Civil War dioramas in the Freighthouse during the month of January.

The dioramas depict two courageous battles fought in Maryland by Michigan's 17th Infantry in September of 1862. The Dioramas total over 750 soldier figures in the "Battle of South Mountain" and "The Battle of Antietam." Delcamp and other Civil War historic impressionists will be on hand from 9A.M. to noon each Saturday to answer questions about the displays.

Of special historic note is the recruitment and participation of 200 Ypsilanti Normal School students who took part in the 17th Michigan Infantry and these battles.

Kiwanis at the Market

The Kiwanis Club of Ypsilanti is planning a fund-raiser at the Ypsilanti Farmers' Market on December 7 and 14, selling the new 1997 Ypsilanti Historic Museum Calendars and theYpsilanti historic coverlets. These are small lap blankets (5' X 8') especially made for Ypsilanti, with portraits of historic homes, old buildings and landmarks of Ypsilanti, such as the water tower and the history museum. The colors are dark green on cream and will be specially priced at $50.

Ypsilanti's FARMERS' MARKET

December

7 Holiday Bazaar
Country Cousins, Ken & Linda, country ballads & hymns
14 Ypsilanti High Chamber Singers
11 A.M. performance
Herb & Marcie Miller and Friends, bluegrass
21 Mike Shelata & Richard Lawrence,
vocals w/ guitar and keyboard
28 Dulcimer jam,
guitar accompaniment welcome

January

4 Civil War Dioramas
w/ tour guides 9-noon all month
18 Kids' Trading Card Day:
trading, selling, swapping
25 Railroad Days '97
Come see the Working Kids' Train on Winter Wednesdays.

Winter Wednesday hours:
Jan-Feb-Mar 9A.M.-2P.M.
Saturdays 7A.M.-3P.M.
***Open all year* in the freighthouse**
For information: 483-1480

Depot Town Assoc. Inc.

- DTA Secretary Charlotte Repholv is recovering from surgery and the whole block wishes here an easy recovery. Minutes for November and December will appear in a subsequent publication.
- DTA Treasurer Carol Clare reports more than $15,000 raised by the organization so far for the installment of the the street clock next year. Thanks to all who supported the campaign.
- Depot Town's annual Victorian Holiday will be a series of individual business open houses on Saturday and Sunday, December 7 & 8.
- DTA's December19th meeting will be a 6P.M. pot luck dinner at Renewed Interest Antiques. All neighbors are encouraged to bring a dish to pass.

Access Task Force organized

Handicap access is the focus of a group seeking feedback and constructive critiques to the intricacies of getting around in Depot Town. Bon Rose Fine invites all who have interest, knowledge, and/or a stake in adequate access to join this study with a view toward a local handicap directory, signage, or a brochure as their product. Call her at 434-4555 to let her know of your availability.

In November two new handicap parking spaces were added to the district; one in front of Remington by Design, the other in front of Olde Towne Coin & Gold.

Railroad Days '97 coming to the Market

Experience railroad history in photos, song, exhibits, and railroad telegraphy at the Ypsilanti Farmers' Market on Saturday, January 25.

The Toledo Chapter of the Morse Code Telegraph Club will be operating antique Morse Code telegraphy sounders throughout the day. Visitors will be able to operate and experience the tones of original railroad telegraphic sounders, courtesy of local telegrapher Al Skornicka. Displayed in the Freighthouse will be pictures of American railroading in the 1940s, paper models of early locomotives, and the Market's collection of railroad logos. A railroad safety color area will be set up for children.

The Friends of the Freighthouse will be displaying, for the first time, original copies of construction blueprints of the passenger depot, freighthouse, the MCRR greenhouse, as well as their building of Depot Town's railroad buildings, circa 1919

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THE DEPOT TOWN RAG
A publication of the Depot Town Association, Inc. a nonprofit, tax-exempt corporation dedicated to preserving the unique character of the neighborhood and to the enhancement of its business climate. -Tom Dodd, editor
The Depot Town Association, Inc.
Sandy Hoag, president
P.O. Box 970-235
Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197-0804
The Depot Town Rag
Tom Dodd, editor
1680 Cliffs Landing
Ypsilanti, Michigan 48198-7305

Depot Town Association 1996 officers:

President - Sandy Hoag, Remington by design
Vice president (president elect) - Roger Julie, Renewed Interest Antiques
Secre tary - Charlotte Repholv, Me 'n' My Sisters Country Store
Treasurer - Carol Clare, City of Ypsilanti

The Association meets on the third Thursday of every month at 6 P.M. in Renewed Interest Antiques, 33 East Cross Street. All interested parties are welcome to attend and participate.

Twenty years of Rags

As we mark this publication's second decade, we quote from the 'hysterical marker' presented to the editor at its fifteen-year mark:

"The Depot Town Assocation
In hartfelt gratitude
sp and in lieu of other
more perishable gratuitites,
does this 18th day of April, 1991,
present this placque.
In appreciation
of the lovingly
arduous labor of
Thomas A. Dodd
founder and editor Depot Town Rag."

The 'placque' included a watercolor rendering of the paper's banner done by EMU Art Department's Debbie Smith Golden.

(In keeping with *Rag* tradition, even the middle initial was incorrect! - ed.)

"Wishing You A Merry Christmas"
HANSEN'S
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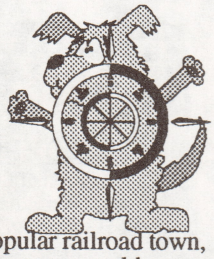
"Lets keep Christ in Christmas"

Depot Town was a destination for this travel agent



Starting out in another popular railroad town, Bellevue, Ohio, Linda Zimmer spread her career across the continent and wound up next to the tracks in Ypsilanti. From her desk at Depot Town Travel Inc., she is assisted by Maura, whose enthusiasm for having her belly rubbed is belied only by her outward appearance as a rotweiler.

Returning to the mid-west from California, Linda was thrilled to find her apartment on North River Street and move her agency expertise from an Ann Arbor location to Depot Town - quite a departure from selling for Christian Dior and Nordstrom at the Mall of America. She's used to contrasts, though. Before that she was a specialist in cancer and heart research.

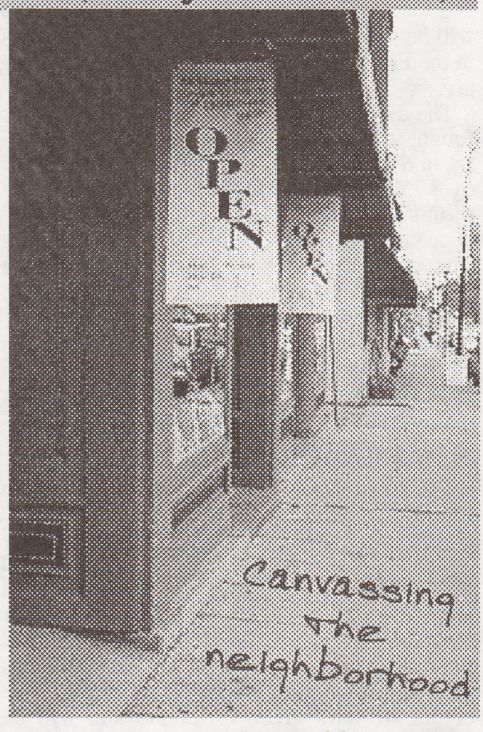
"I chose Depot Town because it reminded me so much of Greenwich Village," she confides. She finds her training in travel through American Airlines in Dallas, Texas, was just the background she needed for doing business from her elegant salon/office on East Cross Street. The small town atmosphere is reflected in her personalized service, as well. Depot Town Travel Inc. boasts "We do it *ALL* for you!" with no agency fees, free ticket delivery, assistance with frequent flyer programs, discount airport parking, and student travel vouchers.

Expanded hours highlight Linda's addition to the district's three-year-old agency: M-Tu-W-F 9A.M.-5:30P.M., Thursday 9A.M.-7P.M. and Saturday 10A.M.-2P.M.

Stop in and pet the dog while planning your vacation.

Dateline: Depot Town

A Neighborhood Forgotten by Time (and Life and Newsweek)



Street seen: Banners wave proudly

Bill Labedski's *Vital Signs* are seen up and down the block this month in the form of vinyl letters on canvas banners hanging from the awning struts. First appearing at Miller's Ice Cream Parlor, they then spread to Cady's Grill and Richard Reid's Hair Station. Vital Signs' creativity burst upon the block this fall when Bill opened his unique sign shop on North River Street and we're already feeling the effect. Waving banners are so much more effective than flashing electric lights in this old commercial district that many predict this new/old phonomenon will soon be seen up and down both sides of the block.

Christmas in July - it's a lot more than just a philanthropic slogan:

Ann Arbor's Art Van Furniture outlet had its Xmas banners flying above the showroom floor right after the Fourth of July! Depot Town saw some of the first seasonal decor in Remington by Design earlier than that, since Remington (Sandy Hoag) hypes the holiday all year 'round with great élan and elegance.

This fall found yet another local business touting the season of giving with trees and ornaments displayed in the windows of Richard Reid's Hair Depot and Hon's Flowers which have been recently connected since Reid has taken over the operation of both enterprises.

My 'n' My Sisters' Country Store celebrated the season's opening in October with an event set to herald their most recent expansion into their riverside location.

By December, the rest of this old district has joined the tradition and will host a series of open houses and galas to herald seasonal observations highlighted by the annual Festival of Lights in Riverside Park which runs from Thanksgiving to New Year's Eve.

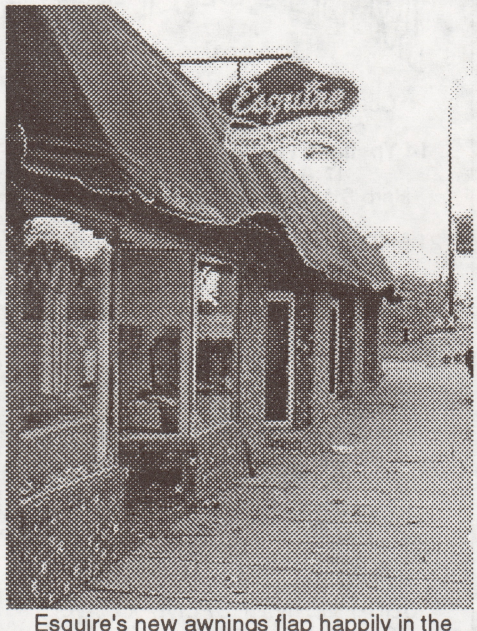
Watch for the arrival of the ghost of Norman Rockwell. He's sure to find this block as much fascinating fun as Stockbridge, Massachusetts.

In full sail at the river bank

Canvas awnings have never seemed so approprite to this old district as they did when they appeared at the end of October on the front facade of Esquire Custom Drapery and Blinds next to the Cross Street Bridge. An addition to the block in the 1960s, this four-bay building was added to the street scene before the creation of the Historic District and just never seemed to fit. A previous owner even erected a giant billboard (facing Ann Arbor so no one would notice) without a permit and was forced to remove it at great expense.

All that's behind us now, as Ted Barron has expanded his professional window treatments and household products into the entire building and created a most ambient atmosphere with the new dark green awnings. Not only are the four bays connected, but the one-story brick building now seems much more connected to the rest of the block.

Real canvas awnings started returning to this neighborhood in the last decade and shop owners quickly found them to be their best signage opportunity. Lettering on the fringe flaps provided a perfect place to advertise and the added protection for shoppers was admired by all. It's just one more example of the incredible practicality of the nineteenth century. Watch for the same amenities to appear soon at the malls.



Esquire's new awnings flap happily in the breeze from across the Huron River. In addition to advertising space and shade, shed style awnings seem to provide 'eyebrows' for your otherwise flattened-out facades.

Ypsi Dixit:

A burden shared

While reading Thomas Godfrey's *Murder for Christmas*, Depot Towner Donald Broersma noted the following inclusion in Ellery Queen's *The Adventures of The Dauphin's Doll* on page 296:

"The professor's mental processes also tended to confuse Mrs. Ypson. She never ceased to wonder why instead of shortening his name to Ypson, her husband had not sensibly changed it to Jones. "My dear," the professor once replied, "you are an Iowa snob." "But nobody," Mrs. Ypson cried, "can spell it or pronouce it!" "This is a cross," murmured Professor Ypson, "which we must bear with Ypsilanti." "Oh," said Mrs. Ypson.

. . . His favorite adjective for his wife was "ypsiliform," a term, he explained, which referred to the germinal spot at one of the fecundation stages in a ripening egg and which was, therefore, exquisitely *a' propos*."

A Depot Town that's not yet in the history books

Remember when:

...the Sidetrack Grill was called 'Edith's Sidetrack?'

...Turner's Restaurant had a great one dollar breakfast?

...every other business in the block was a TV repair shop?

...the gas station in the middle of the block sold more carry-out beer from the shack next door than any other distributor in town?

...Susan Sayre was the first 'Lady Mayor'?

...neighborhood dogs 'went ballistic' when they heard circus lions roaring at night on Frog Island?

...the Anheuser Busch Clydesdales hooked up to the beer wagon right in the middle of the street?

...when the Ypsi Press first called us 'DTA' and we knew we had arrived!?

...we thought Jonesy was old when he was only eighty?

Then, dearie, you're much older than many of the folks down here!

Cady's GRILL

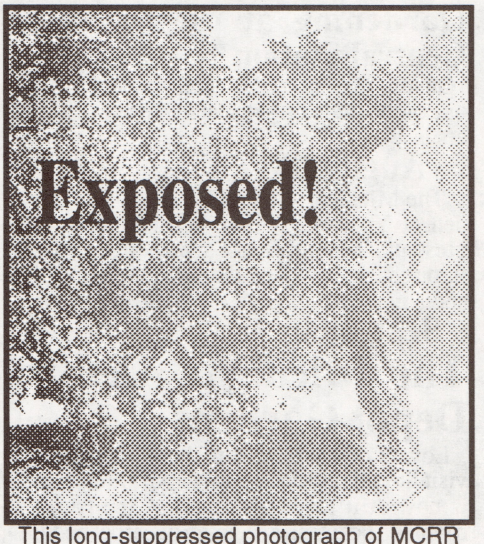
Where friends come together for good food & drink

A local affair

Noting "They're not old; they're 'classics'," both celebrants shared the year with the Hudson behind them.

When Lynda Hummel and Her Honor the Mayor, Cheryl Farmer, celebrated their birthdays at the Ypsilanti Automotive Heritage Collection in October, they certainly made it a local affair that others could replicate for the good of the neighborhood. Gwen Blackmer catered the affair from Miller's Ice Cream Parlor, while Linda French extended her liquor license from across the street at the Sidetrack. Jack Miller and his museum sponsors may have made out best of all, since proceeds from the drink sales went to the Collection.

Some said it was their first visit and virtually everyone applauded the concept of deferring gifts for the good of the Collection. Hey! Who wants presents at this age, anyway!?



This long-suppressed photograph of MCRR depot gardner Laidlaw has nothing to do with why he left town, say local historians. He's just smelling the roses.

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New Year Jubilee

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apiece (or $15 at the door). Children ages six to twelve can get a badge for $5 each and children five and under can attend the Jubilee for free. For families who would like to attend the Jubilee but feel it may not be affordable right after the expense of the holiday season, a limited number of free badges are available. For more information, call Lynda Hummel at 483-5861.

The Jubilee is pleased to feature a number of very well-known performers this year. The Freight House is Depot Town will feature dancing with **Nite Flight**, Calypso and reggae music, during the first part of the evening and finish off the second half of the evening dancing to the rockabilly music of **George Bedard and the Kingpins.**

At the Riverside Arts Center, one of this area's favorite comedians, **O.J. Anderson**, will use comedy, mime, clowning, bad props and whatever else it takes to make you laugh. O.J. is back for his fifth year, performing from 7-8P.M. O.J. is followed by **The Lone Star Country Line** dance group. In addition to these performers, some of the other featured acts are:

- **Three Men and A Tenor,** a popular comedic *a capella* quartet, returns for a third year at the N.Y. Jubilee after opening for the Beach Boys this past summer.
- **The Gym Masters** - From performing halftime shows for the Washington Bullets and Orlando Magic and originating in Southern college in Tennessee, they present a team show with an anti-drug message.
- **LaRon Williams** - one of the finest storytellers around, blending historical communication and African/American culture into a new mythology.
- **The Ambassadors** - a 19-piece ensemble, led by Michael Letovsky, performing music from the '30s to the present in authentic Big Band style.
- **Paul Vornhagen** - local jazz great, often called 'Michigan's answer to Harry Connick, Jr.' by the Chicago Sun Times.
- **Mr. B** - another local jazz great: an electrifying performer and extraordinary pianist who plays the blues like the old masters.
- **Rick Matle and Sheila Landis** - jazz guitar and vocalist, mellow and lyrical.
- **San of Gemini** - musical celebration for tots to grandparents using a number of percussion instruments.

Others include: Contra Dancing for beginners, Matt Walters, Irish Musicians, Charlene Berry, Mulligan Stew, Our Lady's Madrigal Singers, Jubilee Chamber Players, Divertimente; Cranberry Creek, Wild Swan Theater's "Once Upon a Time", Magic Cracker Jack Explorer Clowns, Go Tell Production, Derby the Clown, and many, many others.

New Year Jubilee badges will go on sale December 16 at all Busch's Valu-Land Stores and at the Ypsilanti Area Visitors and Convention Bureau. Like last year, space is limited, so buy your badges early. For information call the Visitors & Convention Bureau at 483-4444 or 483-5861.

The 'good old days' are still around Down in Ypsi's Depot Town